Poor Gamer's Almanac

Vol. II - Issue 7
November 2005

In this Issue:

Feudal Lords Campaign Workshop

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The Carpathian Paragon Class

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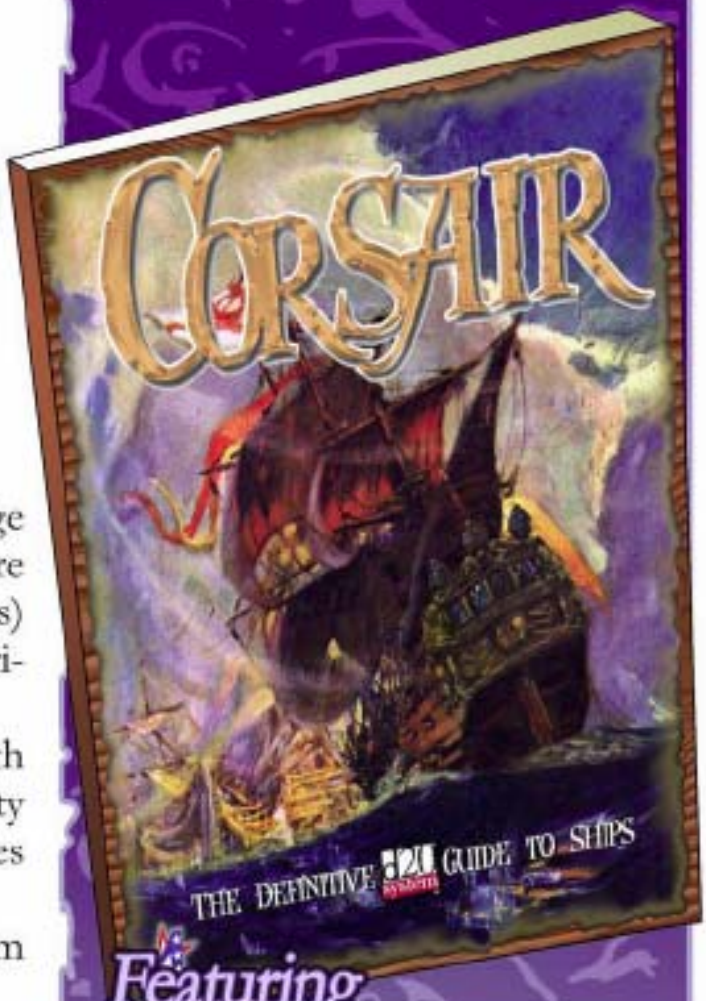

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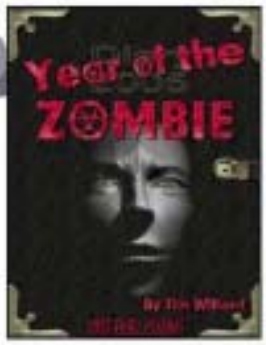

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CONTENTS

1 COVER ART BY J.W. WATERHOUSE
5 THOUGHTS FROM THE PUBLISHER
6 FEUDAL LORDS CAMPAIGN WORKSHOP
9 SCATTERED TRIBES
13 COMMANDER"S ORDERS
16 25 LOW MAGIC ELEMENTS
17 HECTOR: HERO OF TROY
19 CARPATHIAN PARAGON CLASS
20 THE DRAGON'S CLAW

This month's cover art is done by J.W. Waterhouse. If you want to display your artwork as a cover or for future "Art Gallery" articles, please write to Joshua Raynack at pga@aleapublishing.com

We also like to thank Talisman Studios, HinterWelt Enterprises, and Steampower Publishing for their contributions for this month's issue of *Poor Gamer's Almanac.*

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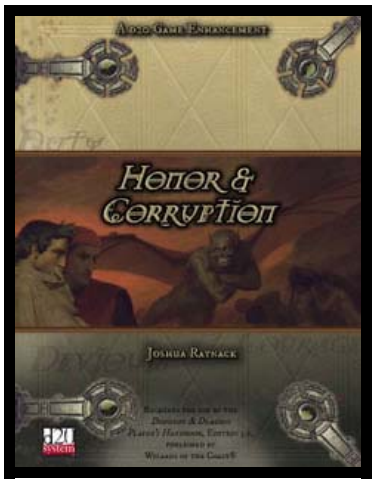

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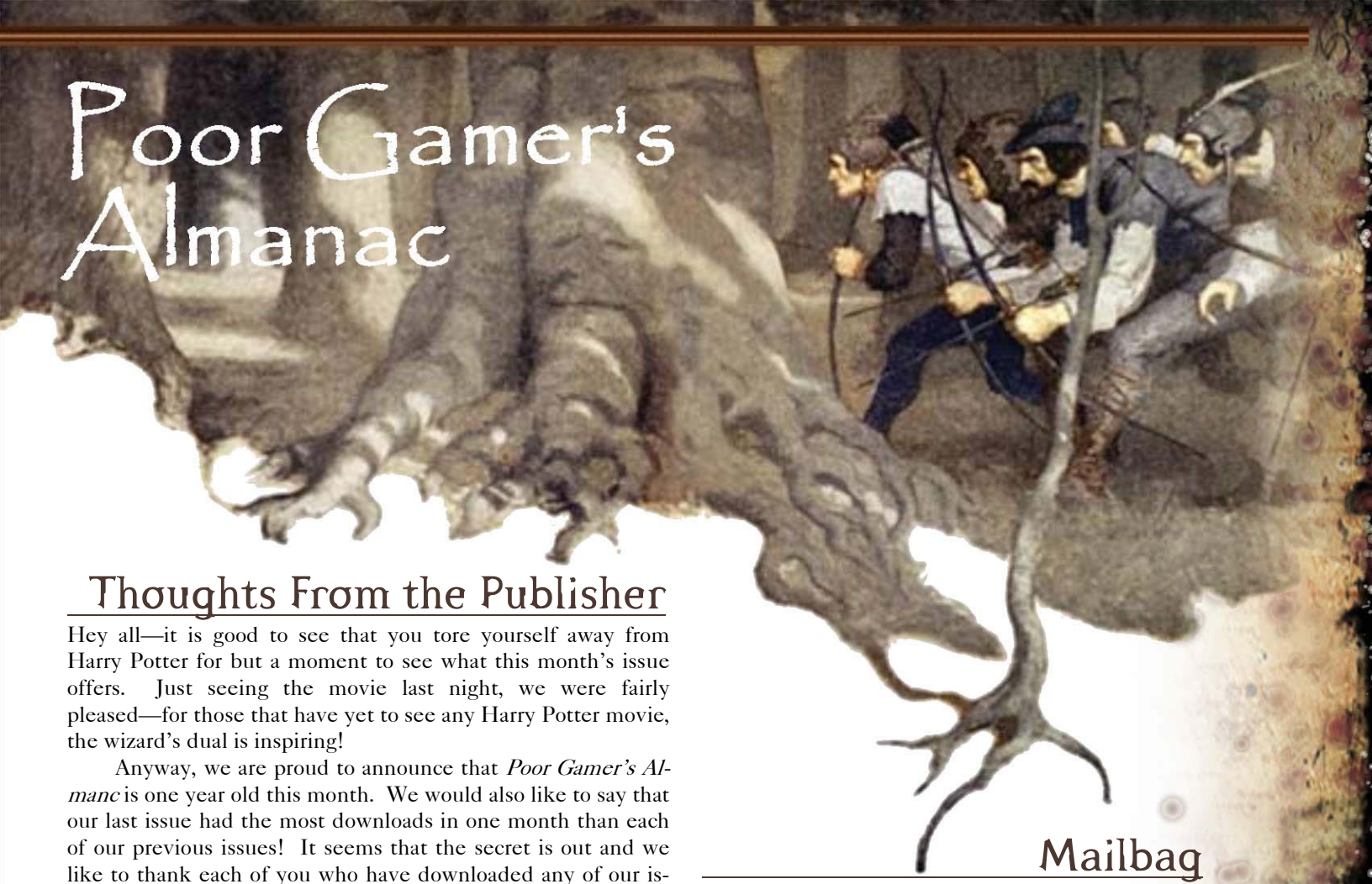

Thoughts From the Publisher

Hey all—it is good to see that you tore yourself away from Harry Potter for but a moment to see what this month's issue offers. Just seeing the movie last night, we were fairly pleased—for those that have yet to see any Harry Potter movie, the wizard's dual is inspiring!

Anyway, we are proud to announce that *Poor Gamer's Almanc* is one year old this month. We would also like to say that our last issue had the most downloads in one month than each of our previous issues! It seems that the secret is out and we like to thank each of you who have downloaded any of our issues for your enjoyment. The more downloads helps us reach out to other companies for advertising space, which in the end enables us bring you a free alternative for your gaming needs.

So now that we survived a year, what will 2006 hold for *Poor Gamer's Almanac*? Well, to be honest, we have no idea—that is why we need you! Our forum is now open to discuss any article ideas you would like to see grace these e-pages or simply chat with us about any of the articles that have graced past e-pages. The forum is hosted by the leading gaming news site: EnWorld. So click the link **HERE** and chat with us—until then we hope you have happy holidays and be on the look out for the *Poor Gamer's Almanac 2005 Anthology*.

—Alea Publishing Group Staff

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This means you! Let this section grow into a Letters to the Editor section. Do you like what you see? Do you hate what you see? What would you like to see grace these pages? So write our Editor and Public Relations guy, Cameron Guill, at:

pga@aleapublishing.com

Mailbag

Hello,

How game balancing are your articles? I mean do you playtest any of the articles before printing them in the e-zine?

Thanks,

Brian

Hey Brian,

Some of the articles that are written by the staff here at Alea Publishing Group are indeed playtested, but not all of them. Due to the time constraint, it is hard to give enough time to playtest all of the game mechanics we publish here.

I will say that all of our products, other than the articles than those found in the *Poor Gamer's Almanac* are playtested for game balance. But to set your mind a little at ease, every article written by our staff writers are usable in each of our campaigns that we run. But if you think something seems a little out of whack—just visit our **FORUMS** and talk with us.

—Alea Publishing Group Staff

Feudal Lords Workshop

By Joshua Raynack

This is the second installment discussing the upcoming *Feudal Lords Campaign Setting*™ from Alea Publishing Group. This will give you an opportunity to experience the creation aspect of a campaign setting and hopefully take a few things to your game table.

Additionally, we are still in development, thus nothing is entirely written in stone. If you like what you see or think it needs a little tweaking, we hope to see you at our FORUMS to discuss your ideas.

Combat

In the *Feudal Lords Campaign Setting*™, we are trying to implement a system for quick and realistic, gritty combat. We liked the imagery of hardy combat veterans coming home from a brutal campaign with scars and battle wounds.

At the same time, we have seen 15th level characters perish with a natural "1" with a massive damage Fortitude saving throw. We want to try to eliminate that, but at the same time still make combat life threatening. Perhaps, even having a character think twice before drawing a sword.

MASSIVE DAMAGE

Any time a character takes damage from a single hit that exceeds the character's massive damage threshold, that damage is considered massive damage. A character's massive damage threshold is equal to the character's current Constitution score + 1 per 2 levels + size modifier; it can be increased by taking the Improved Damage Threshold feat.

When a character takes massive damage that doesn't reduce his or her hit points to 0 or lower, the character must make a Fortitude save (DC 15). If the character fails the save, the character's hit point total is immediately reduced to –1. If the save succeeds, the character suffers no ill effect beyond the loss of hit points.

Creatures immune to critical hits are also immune to the effects of massive damage.

Table PGA7-1: Wounds

Area Affected	Effect
Head	Permanently deafened
Left Eye	-2 to attack*, flankers gain an additional +2 to attack rolls
Right Eye	-2 to attack*, flankers gain an additional +2 to attack rolls
Neck	Attackers receive a +5 circumstance bonus to confirm critical hits.
Torso	Each critical threat a character receives deals 1 point of Constitution damage from blood loss.
Left Arm	Strength bonus with this arm is negated on damage rolls, to determine how much weight that arm can carry is equal to Str -15.
Right Arm	Strength bonus with this arm is negated on damage rolls, to determine how much weight that arm can carry is equal to Str -15.
Left Hand	-2 to attack, 20% chance to miscast spells with a somatic component.
Right Hand	-2 to attack, 20% chance to miscast spells with a somatic component.
Left Leg	Reduce land and swim speed by 10 ft.; -4 initiative; -2 penalty on all Dex based skill checks and Jump checks.
Right Leg	Reduce land and swim speed by 10 ft.; -4 initiative; -2 penalty on all Dex based skill checks and Jump checks.

* If both eyes are lost, then the character is blinded instead.

SCARS

Any time a character takes enough damage to exceed their massive damage threshold and fails their Fortitude save (DC 15), they may instead gain a Scar. For each Scar a character possesses, reduce their Charisma by one point.

Creatures immune to critical hits cannot elect to take a Scar.

WOUNDS

Any time a character takes enough damage to bring a character to –10 hp or beyond, a character my instead take only half damage and receive one Wound. For each Wound a character receives, determine the effects by applying it to the appropriate area (see Table PGA7-1: Wounds).

If a character, elects to take a Wound and still receives enough damage to bring a character to –10 or beyond, that particular character is dead.

Creatures immune to critical hits cannot elect to take a Wound.

Improved Damage Threshold [General]
You are able to withstand a great amount of pain before collapsing in combat.
Benefit: Increase your Damage Threshold by 5.
Special: You may take this feat multiple times, its effect stack. A fighter may choose this feat as one of their bonus fighter feats.

The Dark Ages Are Upon Us!

Want some free stuff about this setting?!
We are preparing a small, free campaign manual about the *Feudal Lords Campaign Setting* (due out early 2006) and we want to hear from you. Send us an email containing your name and email address for a **ONE** time mailing list (meaning we will only e-mail one time regarding this special offer). When the manual is finished, we will send you a download link. Labled your email header **Feudal Lords Campaign Offer** and mail it to:

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The council, fatigued and desperate from a year long seige, opened the doors to the ancient library that had remained unlocked for more than 300 years.

The moment came as the astromancers completed the spell . . . they said it would end the siege and lead them to salvation from the orc hordes.

The weapon summoned by the astromancers fell from the sky . . . but without proper guidance, it gravitated toward the center of the city instead of its outskirts.

After a year of constant fighting, both armies stopped for a brief moment and looked upward to the sky . . .

The Scattered Tribes

By Joshua Raynack

This month we continue to look at the various orc tribes that inhabit the Hill Lands, featured in *A Question of Honor: A Guidebook to Knights*. This month we look at the Scattered Tribes and expands upon our free game enhancement, *Orc Culture in the Hill Lands* found at our website: www.aleapublishing.com.

However, before we do, this article features a class template that was first featured in *A Question of Loyalty: A Guidebook to Military Orders*. So we have briefly outlined the rules below to better understand the concept as well as the idea behind it.

What is a class template?
A class template attaches to a character much like a monster template attaches to a monster, however instead of getting all the special abilities at once, you receive as you gain levels in your particular class. Just as with gaining abilities in a character class, you gain the additional abilities of your class template as well as your abilities gained normally from your class.

How do I acquire a class template?
Class templates have minor requirements, much like prestige classes, that must be met before attaching a class template to a character and all requirements can usually be attained while creating a character.

What are the other costs?
Most of the class templates presented in this book and other future products give you a level adjustment much like a monster template or when playing a monster or advanced race (see *DMG* Chapter 6: Characters).

What are the benefits to having a class template?
Class templates allow you to expand your core character concept without having to choose alternative classes or they allow you to integrate and expand with supplements presenting alternative character classes. Also, besides the special abilities, they allow players to access special feats restricted only to certain members of the order as well as gaining bonus class skills.

What is the purpose of the class template?
The book provides a perfect example how a class template can effect your game or character. Military orders flourished in the middle ages as knights enlisted to further the religious cause during the crusades. However, when designing the various knight prestige classes in *A Question of Honor: A Guidebook to Knights*, there was always the realization that knights were not the only members that existed in a military order. There were sergeant-brother (soldiers whom could not become a knight for lack of a noble birth), turcopoles (local troops that fought along side of order knights, scouts, as well as other lesser positions to make the order run properly. In a fantasy game, especially, a ranger or fighter may join an order to scout for the cause and receive benefits that belonging to an institution might provide without having to have a knightly prestige class.

In other aspects, such as guilds, provide an ample opportunity to reap the benefits a class template offers. Fighters often join thief guilds, though not swift, they provide the muscle as guards and extortion operatives. Mage guilds also attract rogues, loyal to the cause, to steal magical knowledge from rivals. What best way to employ those with tasks, whom are skilled in their trade and loyal to the guild or order.

Also, in designing the class template, it allows a player freedom of choice. They are not restricted to playing a "concept" or alternative character class, nor do they have the frustration to choose between multiple prestige classes, or even the complexities and slow advancement of multiclassing.

On a final note, belonging to a guild or a order should mean more than paying dues, adventure hooks, or possible role-playing opportunities it may provide. This allows the player to become enmeshed in the order, reap the rewards for belonging to something bigger then themselves, and visibly see the impact belonging to an institution imparts.

The Scattered Tribes

As their name implies, this group of orcs dwells in the area that was once the city of Carpathos and became scattered with the city's destruction. Once made of up of several strong tribes, lead by viscous and cunning orc lords that besieged the city, is now nothing but a smattering of broken, desperate creatures trying to regroup after such a disastrous turn of events.

However, due to the collapse of Carpathos due to a meteor summoned by a cabal of Astromancers, many survivors, including those of the Scattered Tribes, have become attuned with psionic capabilities. The mysterious Red Order from Calderis, a nation comprised of psionically endowed baronies, have begun to unlock the psionic potential in tribal members for study.

Some say the order's interest lie in the fact that the capitol of Calderis was too hit by a meteor eons ago that scholars believe led to their psionic skill. Needless to say, the various tribal members see this only as an opportunity for power and some skeptics feel that Red Order sees this as an opportunity for power as well.

Induction: The Scattered Tribes are in a moment of transition—most of the prominent orc leaders perished as the city fell creating much tension and infighting within the surviving tribes. With crusader involvement in the area rises, the remaining tribes have decided to group together and an unstable peace. Half-orcs and Half-giants are seen as keen allies for their strength and eagerness to become accepted. These two races are readily acceptable, especially by those leaders looking to sustain their fleeting power.

Though not accepted as members within the tribe, those of the Red Order are often sought as councilors to would-be leaders.

Banishment: A character who is banished from a tribe loses all class template abilities, however still retains the level adjustment and Tribe class ability. Depending on the influence of the particular member of the Red Order visiting, banishment may also mean surrendering the unfortunate's brain for research.

The Scattered Tribes (Class Template)
Favored Class: Fighter
Level Adjustment: +1

Requirements: To qualify as a member of the Lost Tribe a character must fulfill all the following criteria.
Alignment: Any chaotic, nongood.
Skills: Concentration 2 ranks.
Race: Orc, Half-Orc, Half-Giants.

Class Features

All the following are additional features of the Scattered Tribes class template. These features are extra to the class abilities that are acquired normally through advancement in a character class.

Table PGA7-2: The Scattered Tribes

Level	Special
1st	Psionically stunted, tribe, tribal feat(s), tribal skills, Wild Talent.
4th	Orc Blood
5th	Psionic Qualities
10th	Psionic Qualities
15th	Psionic Qualities
20th	Psionic Qualities

Orc Blood: As a half-giant, you have been fully accepted into the orc tribe. At 4th level, a half-giant Scattered Tribes member gains Orc Blood as a bonus feat (see Chapter Three: Feats for details).

Psionic Qualities: Due to their psionic training from members of the sacred Red Order, a member of the Scattered Tribes receives special psionic qualities. At 5th level and every five levels afterward (10th, 15th, and 20th levels), a Scattered Tribes member chooses one psionic quality from Table: Psionic Qualities of the Scattered Tribes. The favored class (fighter) level of the Scattered Tribes member plus Wisdom modifier determines which psionic quality he can choose. He cannot choose the same psionic quality twice. In addition, anytime a character chooses a psionic quality, their reserve power points are increased by +2.

Table PGA7-3: Psionic Qualities of the The Scattered Tribes

Favored Class Level + Wis Modifier	Psionic Qualities
1	Boost Defense
2	Stable
3	Activate Class Ability
4	Psionic Boost
5	Emulate Feat
6	Extra Attack

Activate Class Ability: Once per day, a member of the Scattered Tribes can spend 1 power point to gain another use of a class or class template ability that has limited number of uses per day. For example, a monk of the Scattered Tribes may spend a power point to gain another use of the stunning fist ability. Spending a power point in this way is considered a free action.

Boost Defense: Once per day, a Scattered Tribes member can spend 1 power point as a free

action when fighting defensively. This gives him double the normal benefits for fighting defensively for the entire round (+4 dodge bonus to AC; +6 if he has 5 or more ranks in Tumble).

Emulate Feat: At the beginning of a member's turn, once per day, he may spend 1 power point as a free action to gain the benefit of a feat that he doesn't have. He must meet the prerequisites of the feat. He gains the benefit until the beginning of his next turn.

Extra Attack: During any round in which a member of the Scattered Tribes takes a full attack action, he may spend 1 power point to make an extra attack at his highest attack bonus. Power points may be used in this way with both melee and ranged attacks. This ability may only be used once per day.

Psionic Boost: Once per day, a member of the Scattered Tribes can spend 1 power point as a free action to increase the effective manifester level of one of his powers by 2. He must decide whether or not to spend a power point in this manner before casting a spell.

Stable: Any time a member is dying, he can spend 1 power point to become stable at his current hit point total.

Psionically Stunted: Due to either the intense training or the psionic rupture caused by the meteor that smashed into Carpathos, Scattered Tribes members cannot manifest psionic powers of any kind that relies on the spending of power points.

Tribe: A member of the Scattered Tribes has a +2 circumstance bonus to Diplomacy checks when dealing with other members of the same tribe. This ability also prevents a character from joining another tribe by any means, regardless of banishment from the Scattered Tribes.

Tribal Feat(s): As member of the Scattered Tribes, you are allowed access and are free to select Tribal Feats which you meet the prerequisite.

Tribal Skills: The following are considered class skills regardless of character class: Autohypnosis (Wis), Concentration (Con).

Feats

The following feats allow characters to enhance their capabilities or add new abilities to the ones they already possess and are accessible to all Lost Tribe members.

Tribal Feats

Tribal feats represent techniques, enlightenments, or divine gifts offered to only members of a particularly tribe. All Tribal feats require you to have the Tribal class ability (of a particular tribe) that is garnered either through the various class templates.

Cerebral Blind-Fight [Tribal, Psionic]
Psionic training has allowed you to manipulate existing talents.
Prerequisite: Tribal (Scattered Tribes) class ability.
Benefit: As the Blind-Fight feat (see *Player's Handbook* Chapter 5: Feats for more details), save that a character can spend 1 power point to negate a miss chance for a single attack.

Cerebral Combat Expertise [Tribal, Psionic]
Psionic training has allowed you to manipulate existing talents.
Prerequisite: Int 13, Tribal (Scattered Tribes) class ability.
Benefit: As the Combat Expertise feat (see *Player's Handbook* Chapter 5: Feats for more details), save that a character can spend 1 power point to double the bonus to Armor Class granted by the feat. For example, if you take a penalty of –3 on your attack roll, you gain a +6 dodge bonus to AC.

Cerebral Dodge [Tribal, Psionic]
Psionic training has allowed you to manipulate existing talents.
Prerequisite: Dex 13, Tribal (Scattered Tribes) class ability.
Benefit: As the Dodge feat (see *Player's Handbook* Chapter 5: Feats for more details), save that a character can spend 1 power point to increase the dodge bonus granted by the feat to +2. This effect lasts for the entire encounter.

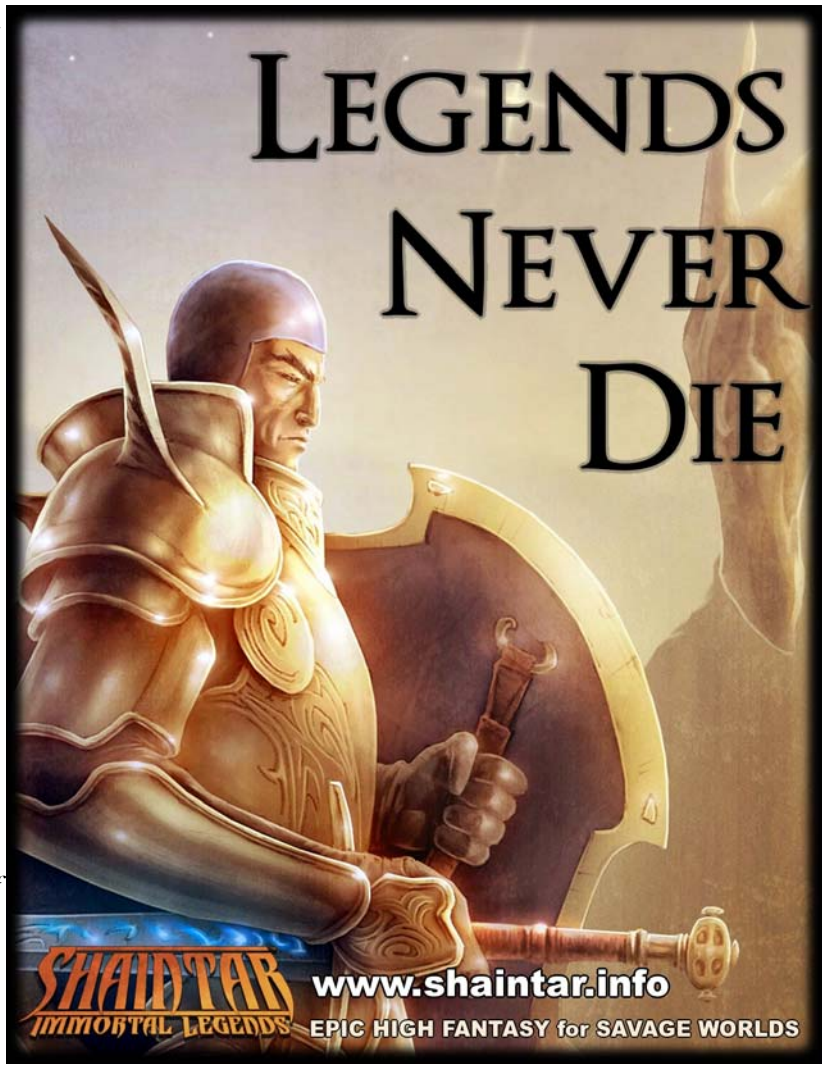
Cerebral Improved Critical [Tribal, Psionic]
Psionic training has allowed you to manipulate existing talents.
Prerequisite: Proficient with weapon, Tribal (Scattered Tribes) class ability, base attack bonus +8.
Benefit: As the Improved Critical feat (see *Player's Handbook* Chapter 5: Feats for more details), save that a character can spend 1 power point to double your critical threat range. Since two doublings equals a tripling, this benefit increases your threat range from 19-20 to 18-20, from 17-20 to 15-20, or from 15-20 to 12-20, including the effect of the Improved Critical feat. This benefit does not stack with other effects that increase threat range.

Cerebral Improved Initiative [Tribal, Psionic]
Psionic training has allowed you to manipulate existing talents.
Prerequisite: Tribal (Scattered Tribes) class ability.

Benefit: As the Improved Initiative feat (see *Player's Handbook* Chapter 5: Feats for more details), save that a character can spend 1 power point to double the bonus on initiative checks granted by the feat, from +4 to +8.

Cerebral Power Attack [Tribal, Psionic]
Psionic training has allowed you to manipulate existing talents.
Prerequisite: Str 13, Tribal (Scattered Tribes) class ability.
Benefit: As the Power Attack feat (see *Player's Handbook* Chapter 5: Feats for more details), save that a character can spend 1 power point to double the bonus on damage rolls by the feat. For example, if you take a penalty of –3 on your attack roll, you add +6 to your damage roll.

Orc Blood [Ancestral]
Orcish blood runs through your veins from a long ancestor.
Benefit: For all special abilities and effects, you are considered an orc. You for example, can use orc weapons and magic items with racially specific orc powers as if you were an orc.
Special: As with all Ancestral feats, you may only take this feat at 1st level.
Note: This feat first appeared in *A Question of Honor: A Guidebook to Knights*.



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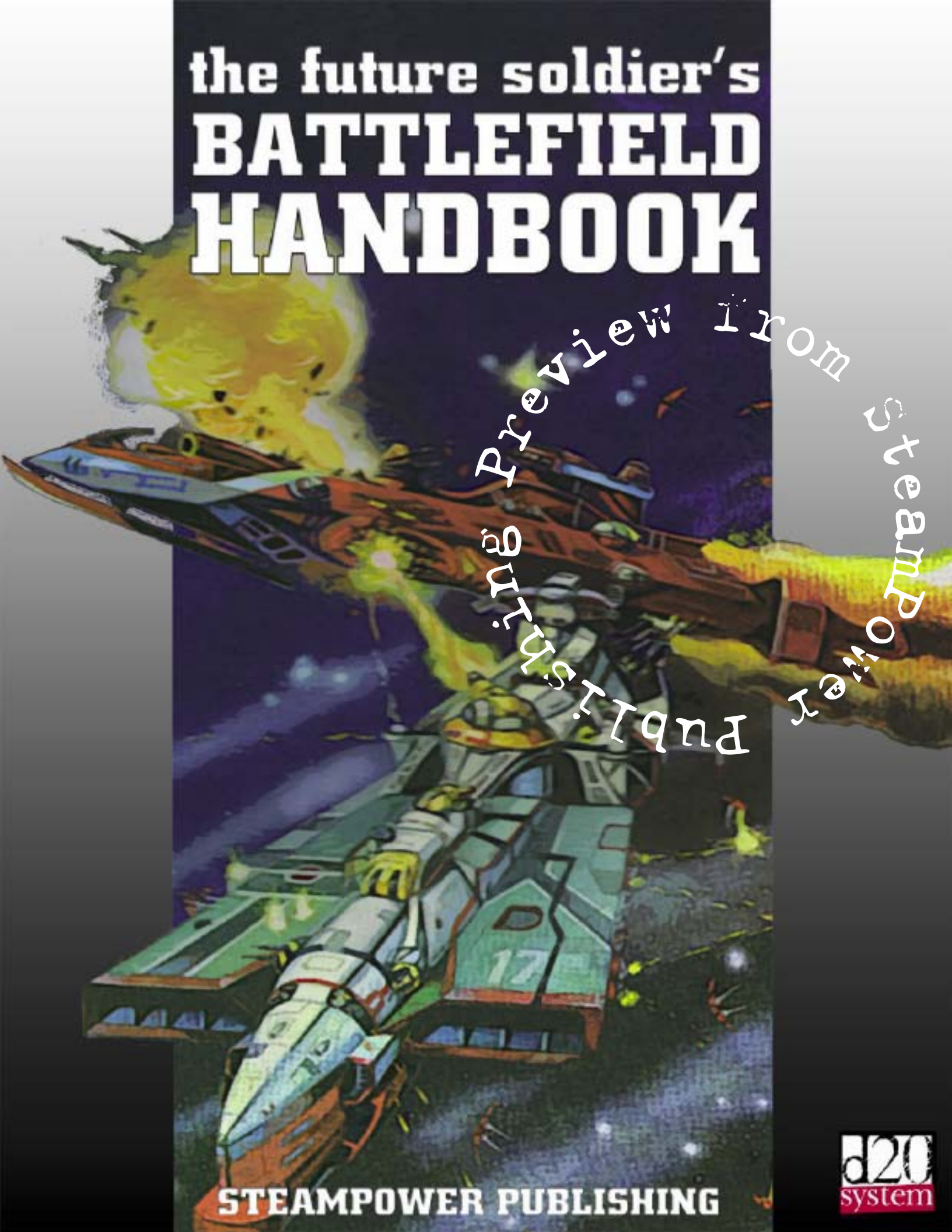

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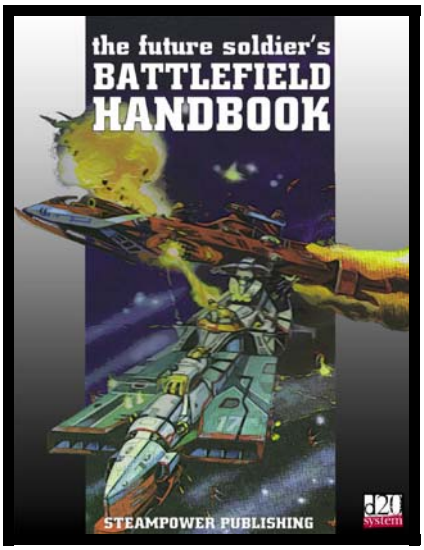

Commander's Orders

By Andrew Kenrick

COURAGE UNDER FIRE

The Courage under Fire rules are intended to represent the trauma, stress and the overwhelming urge to panic and run away that is experienced over the course of a battle. Every soldier fights a constant war within as to whether to stay and fight or run away in the face of danger.

A Courage under Fire check is called for in specific situations where the morale of the character is shaken and his ability to continue to stand and fight is in question. A Will save is made (DC 10), modified depending on the circumstances. If the check is successful the character holds his ground and does not give in to fear. If the save is failed the character's nerve has also failed and he becomes shaken, frightened or panicked. A character remains in this state for the duration of the battle or until they have had some time away from combat to regain their nerves.

The commanding presence ability of the Field Officer advanced class enables troops to shrug off the effects of being shaken, frightened or panicked.

Shaken: If the soldier fails the check by 5 or less, he becomes shaken, incurring a -2 morale penalty to attack rolls, saves and checks. A shaken character that is made shaken again becomes frightened.

Frightened: If the soldier fails the check by 10 or less, he becomes frightened. Characters who are frightened are automatically shaken too, but in addition they flee from the source of their fear as quickly as they can, although they can choose the path of their flight. Once they are out of sight and hearing range of the source of their fear they may act as normal, although they will be forced to flee again should the source of their fear reappear. Characters unable to flee can still fight, although they remain shaken. A frightened character that is made frightened again becomes panicked.

Panicked: If the soldier fails the check by more than 10, he becomes panicked. Characters that are panicked are automatically shaken, but in addition, they run away from the source of their fear as quickly as they can. When running, they have a 50% chance to drop what they are holding. Other than running away from the source, their path is random. They flee from all other dangers that confront them rather than facing those dangers. Panicked characters cower if they are prevented from fleeing.

The saving throw is modified as follows:

Table PGA7-4: Courage Under Fire Saving Throws

Situation	Morale Bonus to Saving Throws
Character behind cover	+2
Character in a bunker or similar defense	+5
Reinforcements expected	+2
Character in an undamaged vehicle	+2
Enemy outnumbered	+5
Character defending his home territory	+10

In battle under normal circumstances, a character does not need to make a Courage under Fire check, but one may be required when in a situation described below.

See Table PGA7-4a for the DC modifiers. Unless otherwise specified, the modifiers are cumulative.

Artillery Shelling: Artillery fire can be devastating to an infantryman in the open – as whistling shells and thunderous explosions grow ever nearer, few soldiers can hold their ground and not flee. A

character that is targeted by artillery fire or is in a unit targeted by artillery fire or is in the vicinity of artillery shelling must make an immediate save.

Unit Casualties: All soldiers in a unit that have suffered casualties have their own morale shaken as their instinct for survival kicks in. A character in a unit that has had one or more of its men killed or reduced to 0 or less hit points must make a save. A save must be made each time a unit suffers a casualty in battle. Note that although injuries to soldiers modify the DC of the check, on their own they do not call for a save.

Personal Wounds: The thoughts of a soldier seriously injured in battle immediately turn to survival. A character reduced to less than 50% hit points must make a save each time they incur a further wound. The DC modifiers for personal wounds are **not** cumulative.

Enemy Armor: To an infantryman out in the open, a tank is a terrible and frightening thing, often indestructible to their light arms. An enemy tank that approaches within 15 ft. of an unprotected infantryman forces a save, as does a tank that fires on an infantryman. A vehicle that an infantryman or his unit has already successfully damaged never forces a save.

Friendly Troops Fleeing: The sight of friendly countrymen deserting their posts and fleeing can leave a soldier bitter and frightened. A character that sees allied troops fleeing from the enemy must make a save.

Sniper Fire: Snipers are often deployed in a battle as much for their ability to shake the morale of the enemy as for actual killing.

Snipers frighten their foes by attacking them from the shadows and allowing them little opportunity to defend themselves. A character who is fired at by a sniper, or who is in a unit fired at by a sniper must make a save.

Orbital Bombardment: It is a very brave or very foolhardy soldier who does not run for cover when confronted by an orbital barrage. A character who is in the radius of an orbital bombardment or who witnesses a bombardment nearby must make an immediate save.

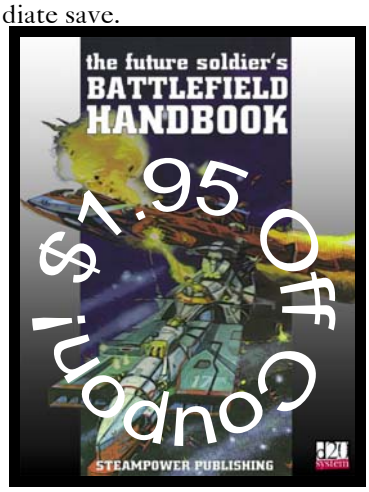

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Table PGA7-4a: Courage Under Fire Save DCs

Situation	DC
Artillery Shelling	
Character targeted directly	+10
Unit targeted	+5
Nearby artillery shelling +0.	+0
Unit Casualties	
Each soldier killed	+5
Each soldier disabled or dying	+2
Each soldier injured	+1
Personal Wounds	
Reduced to 50% or less hit points	+0
Reduced to 25% or less hit points	+2
Reduced to 10% or less hit points	+5
Disabled or dying	+10
Friendly Troops Fleeing	
Character has less than 5 allies within sight	+10
Fleeing allies from same unit	+5
Fleeing allies	+0
Sniper Fire	
Character targeted directly	+10
Unit targeted	+5
Sniper not spotted	+5
Orbital Bombardment	
Unit within orbital bombardment radius	+20
Orbital bombardment within sight	+10

25 Low Magic Campaign Elements

By Joshua Raynack

What sort of elements make up a low magic campaign? How much magic is too much and how little is too little? When designing a campaign, a setting, or a new rules system, how magic is used and how prevalent it is in a world always comes up.

The easiest thing to do is to leave the magic system as it is. But how does that make campaign A different and unique from campaign B? The list below provides a few suggestions on how you can slightly alter the use of magic in your d20 fantasy setting to give your world a unique and fresh new feel.

Suggestions

1	Wizards must be specialized.
2	Nobles cannot be resurrected; it would cause too much confusion with property rights.
3	Elves do not make use of *raise dead*, *resurrection*, or *true resurrection* but instead they use *reincarnate*; it is more in tune with their chaotic nature.
4	You can only be brought back to life by a spell cast by someone of the same faith.
5	*Cure* spells only work on subjects with the same faith.
6	*Cure* spells heal with d6s rather than d8s.
7	All damaging spells deal damage one die-step less than normal to a minimum of d4 (ex. *Fireball* deals damage in d4s; *nightmare* deals 1d8 damage).
8	Eliminate metamagic feats.
9	Increase metamagic spell slot by 1 (ex. a quicken spell would require a spells five levels higher instead of four).
10	No one can be brought back form the dead.
11	Eliminate +1 weapons; characters will only find magical weapons of +2 or greater. Therefore, characters will get magical weapons later than normal during their adventuring career.
12	Spells do not stack with other spells regardless of the type of bonus provided.

Suggestions Continued

13	Eliminate the adept NPC character class.
14	Require that those wishing to be of a spellcasting class; they must first have at least one or two levels in the adept NPC character class.
15	A spell that brings a character back from the dead causes the character to loose an additional level then normal.
16	Reduce spells areas by half.
17	Increase casting time from one standard action to one full round action.
18	Copied spells required a Spellcraft check (DC 20 + spell's level) rather than (DC 15 + spell's level).
19	Eliminate spontaneous spellcasting.
20	Casting an evil spell grants 1 taint to the caster.
21	Spells with the good descriptor can only be cast by those of a good alignment.
22	Arcane spellcasters (except bards) must always have their familiar within eyesight to cast spells.
23	Bards must make a Perform check (DC 10 + spell level) to cast a spell.
24	Clerics must make a Knowledge (religion) check (DC 10 + spell level) to cast a spell.
25	Wizards and sorcerers must make a Knowledge (arcane) check (DC 10 + spell level) to cast a spell.

The most important thing to remember when implementing a few or all of these changes is that what is good for the goose is good for the gander. Meaning, the NPCs must follow the same rules as the characters.

Also, remember the more rules you create for your game, the more rules you can break (no, I am not contradicting the paragraph above). What is meant is that you can introduce new feats or prestige classes that utilize these rules to their advantage: A Resurrection Priest prestige class that can heal those of all faiths or a feat that would allow nobles to come back from the dead.

HAVE MORE IDEAS ON THIS MATTER?

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Hector: Hero of Troy

By Andrew Kenrick

Hector is the first born son of Priam and Hecuba, and is the heir to the throne of Troy. Hector is the mightiest of Troy's warriors and the leader of its army, and is one of the few heroes that the Achaean leaders truly fear. In times of peace, Hector was a skilled diplomat and well-respected ambassador to the courts of Troy's neighbors.

Personality: Unlike many of his Achaean counterparts, Hector is a man of peace, not of war, and he wears the mantle of general uncomfortably. Hector has inherited the wisdom and sense of his father. In peacetime this helped him become a good diplomat, and in war it has made him an accomplished tactician and general.

Hector is a devoted husband and father to his wife Andromache and son Astynax, and it is because of them that he throws himself so completely into the defense of the city.

Appearance: Standing tall and broad shouldered in his bronze armor and crested helmet, Hector is a fearsome sight on the battlefield. Yet from within the helmet gaze the eyes of a compassionate man, his well-muscled and tanned features hidden beneath the layers of heavy metal. Hector wears a distinctive helm, topped with a great crest of horse-hair. When not wearing his military garb, Hector dresses in simple yet well-made tunics. His only nod to affluence is the priceless, marble-handled sword worn at his waist.

Encounters: Before the Trojan War, Hector could be encountered in any number of foreign courts, acting as a representative of the interests of the Trojan state. When not abroad, Hector can be

found in his house in the palace, either playing with little Astynax or talking affectionately with Andromache. Sometimes he can be seen in the bastion or outside the walls of the city, practicing with his soldiers. A PC might seek out Hector for training or practice, and he will be all too ready to help.

A PC fighting in the ranks of the Trojans is likely to regularly meet Hector, especially if he fights especially well or rises to command men of his own. Hector is well-liked by his men and few would refuse his orders.

Hector: male human (Trojan) Paladin 17; CR 17; medium humanoid; HD 17d10+34; hp 132; Init +1; Spd 20ft (30ft without armor); AC 28 (+1 Dex, +9 breastplate, +5 large bronze shield, natural armor +1, ring of protection +2), touch 13, flat footed 27; Base Atk +17, Grp +21, Atk +26 melee (1d6+8/x3, +4 shortspear) or +20 ranged (1d6+5/x3, +1 shortspear), Full Atk +26/+21/+16/+11 melee (1d6+8/x3, +4 shortspear) or +20/+15/+10/+5 ranged (1d6+5/x3, +1 shortspear); SA smite evil 4/day; SQ aura of courage, aura of good, detect good, divine grace, lay on hands, remove disease 4/week, special mount, turn magical beast; AL LG; SV Fort +15, Ref +9, Will +9; Str 18, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 16

Skills & Feats: Diplomacy +25, Handle Animal +23, Knowledge (nobility) +11, Ride +21, Sense Motive +15; Combat Expertise, Dodge, Leadership, Mobility, Negotiator, Spring Attack, Weapon Focus (shortspear), Whirlwind Attack

Languages: Greek, Akkadian

Possessions: +4 breastplate armor, +3 heavy bronze shield, amulet of natural armor +1, ring of protection +2, +4 shortspear, +1 shortspears x 3, cloak of charisma +2

Spells prepared (3/3/0/0 – DC 11+spell level): 1 – bless, divine favor, resistance; 2 – bull's strength, eagle's splendour, shield other

Followers: Hector is the captain of Troy and commands its defenses. He has a leadership score of 23 and the following men who swear loyalty directly to him. Hector's followers are drawn from the guard, the militia and the noble heroes of Troy as detailed on page 20 of *The Gates of Troy*: 2 6th level fighters (guard sergeants), 2 5th level fighters, 4 4th level fighters, 7 3rd fighters, 13 2nd fighters, 135 1st fighters and warriors. Hector also has a 15th level cohort, his charioteer and half-brother Cebriones, a 15th level fighter.

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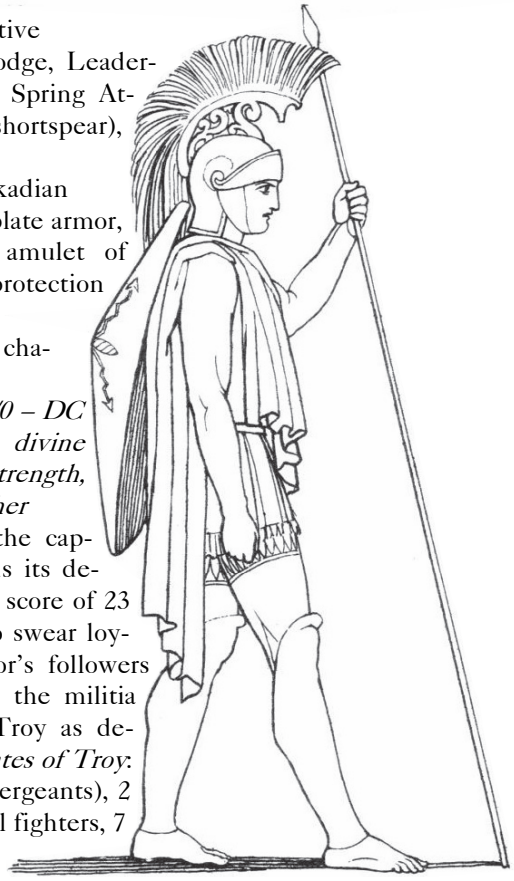

Carpathian Paragon Class

By Joshua Raynack

Yacob and Daniel the Swift crept carefully in the shadow of a crumbling tower. They both spied uneasily at the hyena-like creature shuffling through the rubble only fifty or so feet away.

"Have you ever heard of one of those things before. Its like something you might find in the Ancient Plain." Yacob, the first to spy the creature, watched in awe as it picked away armor from a badly burned corpse.

Daniel was just as amazed. "No, never. However, all manner of strange creatures have been seen in the city since the cataclysm. Do you think it can use that mace it carries?"

"It's standing upright isn't it? But if your asking if we can kill it—well, we are Carpathians, aren't we. The true question is will you be able to cook it?"

"Well, it looks like a hyena or dog, and everyone knows I can make stringy dog meat melt in your mouth." Yacob and Daniel looked at each other as their stomachs growled in pain.

"On the count of three . . ."

What doesn't kill us makes us stronger.

-Lord Fallon,
Carpathos Survivor

The city of Carpathos, once rivaling the grand city of Argos in exotic splendor, lays in ruin. The cataclysm, in the form of a huge meteor, destroyed the most of the inhabitants as well as the orc hordes that besieged the city. The survivors have struggled to rebuild their shattered lives as teems of warbands have entered the ruins to find precious adamantine embedded in chunks of meteorite.

Adventurers: Carpathians, from the meager peasant to rich aristocrat rotting in his own corrupted, extravagant wealth, through the disaster have been forced into the realm of adventure. Most Carpathians must scrounge about the rubble that once was their markets and noble merchant houses to find food and other necessities of survival. Many search the ruins in search of buried treasure vaults; try to reunite with their loved ones; or form into small warbands to meek out an existence.

Characteristics: Carpathians have learned to think on their feet and have found courage contradictory of their previous complacent lives. Ironically, most know the city better as a ruin then the metropolis it once was, since knowledge is survival. When an opportunity presents itself, Carpathians usually take it without hesitation.

Alignment: Carpathians have forsaken previous attitudes that harnessed their old lives as well as the notion that Carpathos will rise from the ashes. Those that witnessed the destruction are merely happy to be alive. Carpathians live from day to day and usually have adapted a chaotic mindset. However, this is not a prerequisite for the class.

Religion: When the meteorite destroyed the city it also destroyed the structure of its inhabitant's faith. Though some still pray and offer sacrifices to the gods and goddesses they worshipped before the travesty, many have forgotten their previous practices in lieu of finding their next meal.

Background: Carpathian paragons have acquired their diversity in skills through simple survival. They are constantly adapting their ways to suit themselves for better survival situations. They use their cunning nature to better defeat the various monstrous humanoids and undead that haunt the ruins.

Races: Although humans dominated the city of Carpathos and its wonders, many other major races claim Carpathian citizenship.

Other Classes: Carpathians, with their recent adaptation and need for survival, fit well with almost all other character classes.

GAME RULE INFORMATION

Table PGA7-5: The Carpathian Paragon

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Spells per Day
1st	+0	+0	+2	+0	Adaptive learning, Carpathian citizenship	—
2nd	+1	+0	+3	+0	Urban tracking	+1 level of psychic warrior
3rd	+2	+1	+3	+1	Defensive roll	+1 level of psychic warrior

Carpathian paragons have the following game statistics.

Abilities: Carpathians are very versatile in their skills and abilities. However, Dexterity is important for their higher class level ability and a good Wisdom will help with manifesting their psychic powers should they tend to pursue a career as a psychic warrior.

Alignment: Any.

Race: Any.

Hit Die: d8.

Class Skills

The Carpathian paragon, like the human paragon, can choose any ten skills as class skills (Knowledge skills must be selected individually).

Skill Points at lst Level: (4 + Int modifier) x 4.

Skill Points at Each additional level: 4 + Int modifier.

Class Features

All the following are class features of the Carpathian.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Carpathian are proficient with all simple and with light armor. In addition, a Carpathian paragon is proficient with any one martial weapon of his choice.

Powers per Day: Beginning at 2nd level, a Carpathian paragon gains new powers per day as if he had also gained a level in psychic warrior. The paragon does not, however, gain any other benefit a character of that class would have gained. This essentially means that the character adds the level of Carpathian paragon to his level in psychic warrior, then determines powers per day and caster level accordingly. If the Carpathian paragon has no levels in psychic warrio, this class feature has no effect.

Adaptive Learning (Ex): At 1st level, a Carpathian paragon can designate any one of his Carpathian class skills as an adaptive skill. This skill is treated as a class skill in all respects for all classes that character has levels in, both current and future.

Carpathian Citizenship: This character is considered a Carpathian citizen and has a +2 circumstance bonus to Diplomacy checks when dealing with other Carpathian citizens. This ability also prevents a character from becoming a citizen of another country of city-sate by any means, regardless of banishment from the country or city-state.

Urban Tracking: At 2nd level, a Carpathian gains the Urban Tracking feat, which allows him to use Gather Information to track down a missing person, suspect, or other individuals within a community (click to see feat).

Defensive Roll: The Carpathian paragon can roll with a potentially lethal attack to take less damage from it. When the Carpathian paragon would be reduced to 0 hit points or less by damage in combat (from a ranged or melee attack), the Carpathian paragon can attempt to roll with the damage.

A Carpathian paragon makes a Reflex saving throw (DC = damage dealt). If the save succeeds, he or she takes only half damage. The Carpathian paragon must be able to react to the attack to execute a defensive roll—if the character is immobilized, he cannot use this class ability.

Since this effect would not normally allow a character to make a Reflex save for half damage, a Carpathian paragon with the evasion ability does not apply to the defensive roll.

This ability may be used an number of times per day equal to his Dexterity modifier.

Carpathian Steel

Since the impact, a rippling of psychic energy rushed of the city. With the heavy amount of adamantine embedded in the meteor, the effect has enhanced some of the steel weapons in Carpathos. Carpathaian steel either ignores hardness of 1 (minor), 2 (medium), or 3 (major).

Type of Weapon	Cost
Ammunition	
Minor	+3 gp
Medium	+6 gp
Major	+9 gp
Weapons	
Minor	+150 gp
Medium	+350 gp
Major	+500 gp

The Dragon's Claw

(originally published in the April/May 2005 issue of Ethos Magazine)

Daru'thurithak looked down at the half-breed boy kneeling before him. He was inclined to snap his neck and feed him to the crocodiles, but this Expericus fellow had brought with him a substantial offering, and that stayed the elder's claw for now. He could smell the human blood in him, and it reminded him of the damnable krup'thas and their spineless men. Half-dragon, he said he was? Maybe his grandfather's grandfather had been dragon-blooded, but he doubted his father had been a true dragon. The boy relinquished treasure too quickly to have been raised by a pure dragon.

"I humbly await your answer, honored Elder," said Expericus without looking up. A strong breeze blew his dark blue hair off his neck, exposing a thin row of sapphire blue scales.

"Humbly wait a little longer. I am still considering your request." Jash'rakus and Kaman'thuros, his fellow Elders, both laughed. Soon the whole audience was chuckling at the half-breed's expense. Daru'thurithak smirked at the gawking crowd, but resumed his scowl when he noticed the shaman was not amused by the display.

"And who did you say your father was?"

"Orionos, the great blue dragon of Mt. Havenstall near the city of Risengriess. It is far from this island, honored Elder."

"Blue dragon, you say? A GREAT blue dragon. Interesting." Daru'thurithak walked around the boy. At least his draconic was fluent. This conversation would have been over long ago had the brat insisted on speaking in the human tongue. "And your mother, was she some great wizard or something equally impressive?"

Expericus twitched his neck at the insulting tone of the Elder's question, but did not look up. "No, honored Elder. She was a traveling scholar."

"Was?"

"She died, honored Elder. She died in childbirth with me."

"Did you tear yourself from the womb with your little baby claws? Is that what happened?" Daru'thurithak circled the boy like a hungry shark.

Expericus sighed deeply. "That, honored Elder, is what I was told later on. When I was old enough to understand."

"I am sure your father was relieved to be rid of a mortal chain."

Expericus' head snapped upward. He narrowed his blue eyes and growled at Daru'thurithak. "Abuse me. Insult me. Kill me if you deem it appropriate. But do not lower yourself to the level of those Neiyar whores by insulting my mother for loving a dragon."

Daru'thurithak looked to the other elders, and then quickly glanced over at the shaman. The shaman held up his hand to remind Daru'thurithak to control his temper.

"You no longer hold any amusement for me, boy," Daru'thurithak said. I have considered your request. No one not of Krakodonian blood shall be allowed near the ruins of Dazu. We will not tempt the wrath of the Great Dragon, a TRUE Great Dragon, by making him waste his time killing you."

"Do you fear the Great Dragon of Dazu's wrath so much, or are you just worried I will be successful?" Expericus stood. He was the first person not of Krakodonian blood who could meet Daru'thurithak's gaze without having to look up.

"I see how you are, boy. You are full of respect and admiration when asking for something. But rejection shows your true colors. Leave this village now while I still suffer you to breathe."

"No, I think you are the one who has revealed his true colors. I hope you village remembers this day."

As Expericus walked out of the village, Daru'thurithak screamed after him. "Know this, boy. The only safe path for you is the road toward Mezzertratrine. Follow any other path and you are fair game for my warriors. Go wallow in your self-loathing with the other outsiders. But try to get into Dazu and I swear to you I will personally skin your hide and make a blanket of it."

Expericus left the village and started up the overgrown path toward Mezzertratrine. He looked up to the sky where the moon should have been, but the jungle canopy blocked his sight. He closed his eyes and stood like a statue, soaking in the sound of jungle things hiding just beyond the darkness. Daru'thurithak was a fool. He understood this now. And the other Elders were his puppets. Gorjik'hadral, the Krakodon mercenary he had met in Mazrana all those months ago, had warned him. The tribal Elders would not listen. They were too consumed by their own petty squabbles with each other and bolstering their enormous egos to ever consider his visions. They would never accept an Outsider, even one of dragon blood.

"What will you do now?"

Expericus turned quickly to find the old shaman standing not more than three feet from him. "I have no quarrel with you," he said to the shaman.

"Nor I you. So we should get along well." The shaman took a step toward Expericus. "Will you answer my question? What will you do now that you have been denied entry to the ruins?"

"I have been denied permission to enter. Not the entry itself. And if you intend to interfere…"

"How old are you?"

"I shall be one hundred in a month."

"Ah, youth. That explains both your passion and your temper. Follow me, boy. I want to show you something."

The shaman walked off into the jungle, and Expericus curiously followed. The old Krakodon waved his hand in front of him, and the undergrowth cleared away. As Expericus followed, the undergrowth sealed back behind him, blocking their path back to the trail.

"What do you know of the Great Dragon of Dazu?" asked the shaman.

"I know it was summoned by the advisors of King Ziknok'Thabunar in order to destroy the Neiyar. Something went wrong, and it turned on the Krakodons, leveling the capital city of Dazu."

"Ziknok'Thabunar sought peace with the Neiyar. He had negotiated the end of the first war, and wanted to engage in trade to the benefit of both races. But old hatreds die hard, and the advisors sought to undermind the King. A human named Rahpen came upon the advisors while they met in secret, and offered to use powerful magics to create a portal through which the destruction of the Neiyar would come."

"Why would the advisors have listened to a human man?"

"Why was your father attracted to your mother? Why does Daru'thurithak shame the tribe with his arrogance? Why do people do anything they do? The why is unknown and unimportant. The fact is they did, and they built a huge portal in the town square."

"But what the advisors did not know," continued the shaman, "was that Rahpen was really Nephar, demon lord and nemesis of the Neiyar. And the portal led straight to the foul heart of the abyss. At the last moment before the portal activated, something happened. A darkness swept over the city. For the first time, a terrible coldness filled the air. Water froze. Plants withered from lack of heat. Then

suddenly the portal exploded. When the ash settled, a sphere of swirling shadow took dragon form. It let out an otherworldly roar, and clouds of shadow spewed forth from its mouth. Wherever the shadow swept over life, the life was drained away. Black tentacles of dense shadow forced their way up from the ground, snatching screaming men, women and children and dragging them toward the dragon's maw."

"Nephar destroyed Dazu? But why?"

"No, no. Nephar was just as surprised as the advisors, and quickly fled. Something had interfered with his magic. Perhaps redirecting the portal somewhere else. The beast leveled the city, and all the warriors fell to its might."

The old man stopped near a small outcropping of rocks. He waved his hand and the stone moved out of the way, revealing a passage.

"I believe you, Expericus. I believe your visions. I believe you can help the Krakodons unite once more." The shaman unsheathed the kukri at his side and handed it to the half-dragon. "It was my father's. And his father's before him. I want you to have it, as I have no sons, and I shall not live to have heirs."

"Daru'thurithak would not possibly kill you over this."

"It is not Daru'thurithak who will kill me. It will be you."

Expericus almost dropped the weapon. "I would never…"

"You will, because you must." The shaman looked down into the dark passage. "Take the passage straight until you come to what seems to be a dead end. Look to your left and you will see a slit in the wall. Insert the blade into the slit, and a secret door will open. Take the ladder upwards and you will find yourself in the center of Dazu."

"How do you know these things?"

The shaman turned to Expericus. His eyes glazed over as he held back tears. "We never should have trusted Nephar. We suspected. But our hatred got the better of us. I tried to escape the dragon, but it caught me with one of its tentacles. I don't know why he did not kill me then. Perhaps it was because I did not scream. We deserved this punishment, after all. He held me in a claw until he finished killing everyone else. He told me the empire would fall. He told me our noble race would degenerate into savages. He told me he could never leave the ruins, but did not say why."

"He said no Krakodon could ever liberate Dazu. And the city could not be liberated by any not of dragon blood. This was the curse Sophia Kalla, the Dark Mother of the Neiyar, placed on us for trying to destroy her people. But the Dragon knew of a loophole. The dragon knew that others bore dragon blood besides the Krakodons. He knew one day these dragon-blooded would find there way to the island. He knew there would be you."

Expericus fell to his knees shaking. The shaman placed his hand on his hand to calm him. "He said I would know the one, for he would have visions, and would have escaped the Green Death, and would stand up to the Elders. Your visions match the visions spoken by the Dragon. You escaped the Green Death when it destroyed your ship and left you stranded on the island. You stood up to the elders when they would not listen. He said he would spare my life only so long until you came. And I was to prove to him you were the one by offering you my head as an offering to the Great Dragon. I am the last surviving offender of that fell night. The time of my punishment, and redemption, has come. Take my head from my shoulder. Take it, and go forth into Dazu to seek the dragon's counsel."

The shaman knelt next to Expericus and exposed his neck to him. The half-dragon stood and drew his sword. "I will not fail you, honored Elder," he said as he lifted the sword above his head.

"It is not me you must not fail. Do not fail my brothers. Do not fail them. You are their only hope at reclaiming their destiny."

Expericus brought the sword down with all his strength. The blade cut easily through the shaman's neck, severing the head from the body. He picked up the head, eyes still blinking, and placed it in a bag. He wiped the tears from his face, and then began the decent into the darkness of the passage to Dazu.

"It is a brave thing to stand alone against one's enemies, ready to die for your beliefs. But is it not also brave, and perhaps smarter, to stand united against a common foe and make them die instead?"

Expericus, Leader of the Dragonclaws

In the Year 620, the Half-Dragon Expericus emerged from the ruins of Dazu with a burning purpose: to reunite the once great Krakodonian race and reclaim its lost empire. Doubly cursed as both an Outsider and for bearing human blood, the half-dragon nonetheless has succeeded in recruited many young Krakodons to his cause. His organization, the Dragonclaws, work to reunite the race under one as of yet unnamed king. While elders and the Neiyar themselves think otherwise, Expericus does not believe he will be (or should be) that future king. But he does believe he will have a hand in raising this king to his throne.

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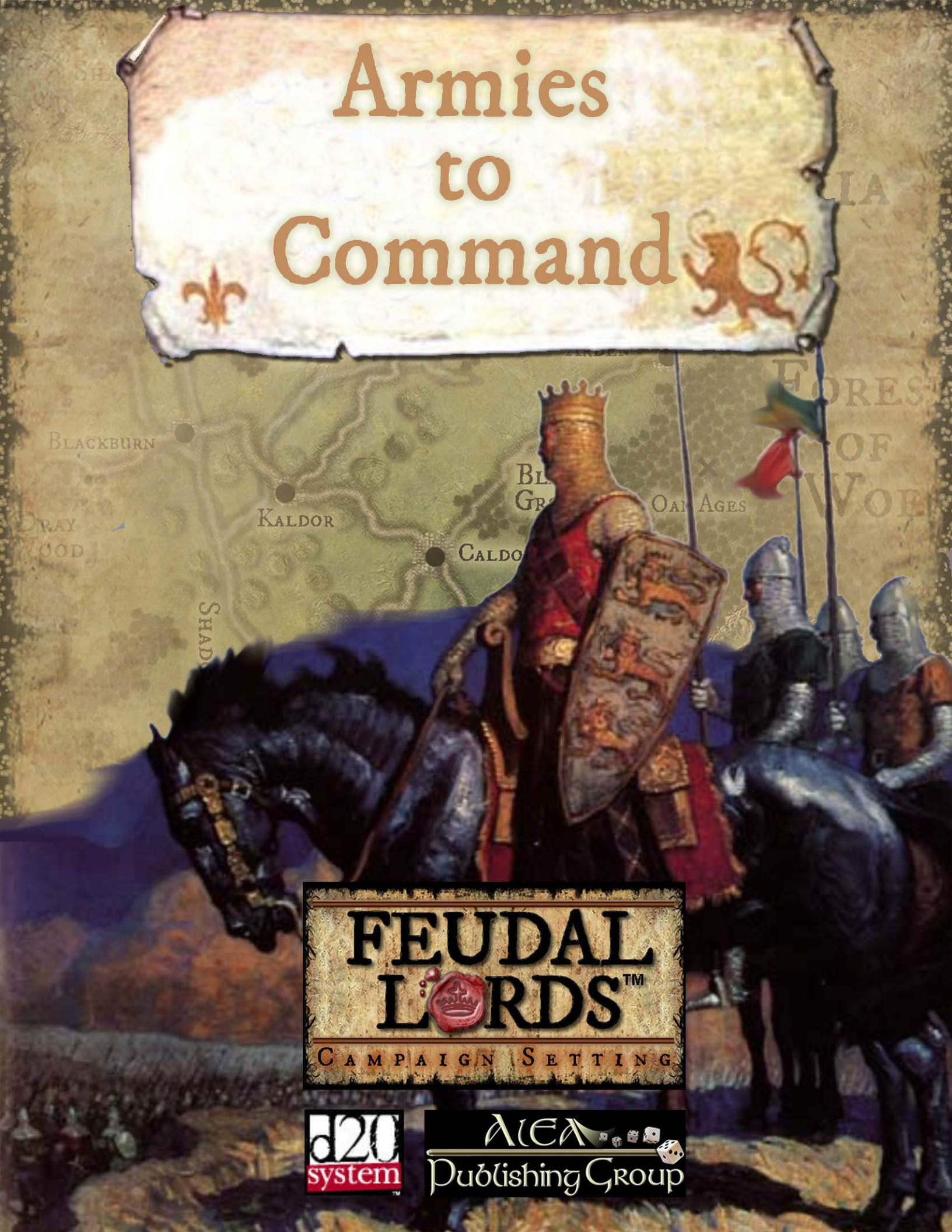

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